



DRAFT MINUTES
Brookfield Conservation Commission
Brookfield Town Hall Room 133
December 5, 2012
7:00 pm

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** A. Dew called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM and established a quorum of members:
Present: A. Dew Chair; R. Blessey, Vice Chair; S. Landis, Secretary/Treasurer; M. Carmody Burr, M. Dew
Absent: J. Bronn, M. Murphy, R. Manning
Also Present: E. Cole Prescott, Recording Secretary; David Keith, Lions Club Representative

MISCELLANEOUS:

Ferry Farm Property – A. Dew stated that the Ferry Farm application is looking to give a conservation easement rather than a conservation piece of land.

52 Huckleberry Hill Road - A. Dew stated that she is sending a letter to the owners of 52 Huckleberry Hill road informing of the town owned open space portion where there is a structure that was built by the previous owner now located on Town-owned property. A. Dew stated that she has discussed this matter with the Town Attorney.

2. **MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING: 11/14/12:** R. Blessey made a motion to accept the minutes of 11/14/12 as presented. M. Carmody seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.
3. **GUESTS AND PUBLIC COMMENT:** Please refer to agenda item 8a.
4. **CORRESPONDENCE:** Please refer to agenda item 8a.
5. **TREASURER'S REPORT:** S. Landis stated reported that there is \$7,999.31 remaining in the budget.
6. **CURRENT PROJECT REPORTS:**

- a. The Nature Center – S. Landis - S. Landis stated that Priority Landscaping will check the invasive plants and the stone wall and check back with her.
- b. Happy Landings – Mike Murphy – No report.
- c. Burr Farms –Marji Carmody – M. Carmody stated that Donn Burr has finished the mowing on the property. M. Carmody mentioned that she has received an estimate to take care of some of the trees that have fallen across the path and she would like to respond to this estimate from Sunburst. M. Carmody stated that she has spoken with the Parks and Recreation Department about having them complete the work, but Sunburst could do all of the work at a scheduled time. A. Dew suggested that Conservation Commission could ask the Parks and Recreation Department for help on other projects. M. Carmody stated that she had received other estimates, and each estimate came in for the same amount for \$1500.00. R. Blessey stated that this amount is a good price. **R. Blessey made a motion to use Sunburst Landscaping for the tree work at Burr Farm. A. Dew seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.**
- d. Williams/Gurski Open Space- M. Murphy, A. Dew – A. Dew stated that some of the trees near the homestead have fallen, but she does not believe that there are any trees down on the trails.
- e. 18 Junction Road – Stephanie Landis – No report.
- f. Gurski Homestead - M. Murphy, R. Blessey, A. Dew – R. Blessey stated that he has three different estimates for two different projects. The first estimate is for \$1200 dollars that does not include machine rental to remove what is left of the two hemlocks on the property. The other estimate includes the machine for \$2000.00. R. Blessey stated that G. Waltz’s price is \$1,000.000 for the project with the machine rental. This is for work near the orchard. The debris will be brought to the Town brush pile. **M. Dew moved that Waltz Excavating complete the job, and M. Carmody seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.**

R. Blessey stated that he had received a price to have the invasives moved out at the Old Gurski meadow that is just east of the brook on Old Merwin Brook Road, and which used to be a field/meadow. R. Blessey stated that the price is about \$1,800 to remove the invasives on approximately 3.1 acres, and the only thing this estimate would not take care of is the few trees that are too large for the machine. The same work had been done in another property in Town that is designated as open space to bring it back to a meadow. R. Blessey stated that this information is for the Commission to consider as it was discussed in the Spring to bring the meadow back to a meadow. A. Dew suggested that the Commission should also look into completing a wetlands permit for the work.

R. Blessey stated that the propane tanks have been installed and there is an inspection scheduled for tomorrow. There will be a pressure test. This is for the house located at 26 Obtuse Hill Road.

- g. Eriksen Farm Open Space –M. Carmody, R. Blessey - M. Carmody stated that she was over at the property and there are piles of mulch around the Quantis Garden with dump trucks full of mulch and chips. M. Carmody noted that this was around the garden and not out in the field. M. Carmody also stated that she will contact Peter Robb to move his mailbox for increased sight visibility. M. Carmody stated that the trees at the Garden need to be pruned. A. Dew stated that the Commission did receive the Arbor Day grant and will be planting trees between the house and the orchard sometime in the Spring.

The Commission moved to item 8a, Community Garden Discussion.

8. NEW BUSINESS:

- a. Community Garden Discussion
 1. Email from M. Coates to A. Dew dated 11/07/12 Re: Community Garden
 2. Email from D. Komlo to A. Dew dated 11/06/12 Re: Gurski's Community Garden
 3. Email from K. Sobb to A. Dew dated 11/11/12 Re: Gardens at Gurski Farm
 4. Email from V. Erdmann to A. Dew dated 11/07/12 Re: Lions community Garden discussion at Brookfield Conservation Commission meeting

R. Blessey addressed the audience. R. Blessey stated that before the Commission hears any comments, he would like to clarify a few things some of which were discussed in the Spring with Mr. Keith when the Commission originally decided to move the garden. R. Blessey stated that there are a few factors that impact what happens on that property: The State of CT has a historic easement over the property, which means that the Commission cannot do anything on that property without first getting approval from the State. R. Blessey noted that the State has said that the buildings are not to be used for any purpose other than approved by them, and the outbuildings are to not be used at all because they are not stable. The State has only allowed that 26 and 28 are habitable. The other concern is the amount of use the lower portion of the homestead has been getting near the unstable structures. R. Blessey stated that the plan for the new garden is to plow four times the amount of current space, but in the upper portion of the field above 28 Obtuse Hill Road, cultivate the soil and put into it some manure and compost now before next year's growing season. R. Blessey explained that the other part of the plan is to move the current fencing and install it in the other location four times larger, and move timber force in the corners so that the fence has more significance to it. R. Blessey stated that the fencing should be planned in such a way so the garden can be expanded for future growth. R. Blessey stated that a parking lot with millings will be

installed by a Town crew at the top of the new site that would accommodate at least three times more cars. R. Blessey also stated that the road leading to the site will need to be improved so vehicles could travel through that area more safely. R. Blessey stated that the currently poor water situation will be remedied because the Conservation Commission is paying for the installation of a well that would service that site which would cost approximately \$15,000. R. Blessey noted that Conservation Commission is aware of the great effort that it took to create that garden, and the Commission is willing to make a step to help. This change will allow the Commission to more easily use the homestead for the future. Mr. Keith stated that he believed that there was one other agreement – that a tool shed was to be installed for the use of the Lions Club Community Gardeners. R. Blessey stated that the only item that the Conservation Commission is asking the Lions Club to fund is a tool shed. R. Blessey stated that an 8 by 10 pre-fab runs in the 2,000 dollar range which will have to run by State approval to make it acceptable.

R. Blessey stated that that the shed may need to look historically accurate to match the site. R. Blessey stated that the state jurisdiction over the property that ends at the wall which the garden would be just south of. R. Blessey stated that the Commission would look to the Lions for the shed and the layout of the plots within the garden space. . Mr. Keith stated that he does not want to see one garden moved before the new one is working. Mr. Keith asked if the Commission has the money to fund the garden, and R. Blessey replied in the affirmative. R. Blessey stated that the money is currently in the account to have this work done for the beginning of May. K. Yates stated that the beginning of the gardening season begins in April. R. Blessey stated that the intention is to have the garden ready for the growing season in the spring of 2013. R. Blessey stated that the shed would need to be done as a group effort because the Conservation Commission would need to apply for approval from the State.

Glen George asked if there is any reason that the State Commission would not approve the garden. R. Blessey stated that the first step is to make the application to the State for the tool shed which will be done in conjunction with the garden relocation.

Rolf Enger asked R. Blessey about the building he uses for the forge, and R. Blessey stated that the Historical Society owns the inside of the building and the outside is owned by the Town. R. Blessey stated that this outbuilding has been since renovated and can be used for that purpose.

A. Dew stated that another reason to move the garden is so the Commission has more room for the parking. K. Yates stated that the seeds were difficult to germinate on the side of Merwin Brook. R. Blessey asked K. Yates in her professional opinion which gets better yield, and K. Yates replied that the plots on the upper portion do.

Veronica Erdman stated that she is seeing a lot of good being offered by this proposal. Veronica asked if the fence could be extended deeper into the ground to prevent woodchucks.

Mr. Keith expressed concern about the date that the new garden will be completed. He asked that if the garden is not completed, the current garden could be used. R. Blessey explained that the intention is to leave the current garden while the work for the new garden is being completed. R. Blessey mentioned that perhaps the fence could be moved as the last step of the process.

Mario Nacinovich asked about parking and traffic concerns in relation to the Garden and Farm Fest. He noted the Commission's past meeting minutes. R. Blessey clarified that traffic concerns also relate to pedestrian traffic along the unstable buildings.

R. Enger asked if there was a time line or plan of events for the timeline of the project. R. Blessey stated that the big item is the well. R. Blessey stated that the application to the State will be in on the first meeting of the month and he stated that he would expect an answer from the state at that meeting. R. Blessey noted that a timeline of events will be sent to Lynn Lyon next week, and asked Lynn Lyon to distribute this information to the other gardeners. Mr. Keith suggested that if the Commission falls short of the timeline, Lynn Lyon be notified. R. Blessey also stated that agendas for Conservation meetings will be sent to Lynn Lyon for distribution.

John Berger, 63 Candlewood Shores Road, asked if it would be better if the Conservation Commission design the shed. R. Blessey stated that the Commission will discuss whether or not they will be involved in the design, but that ultimately the shed should blend in with the character of the property.

Matthew Caminskias of 1 Cedar Hill Road asked what the immediate plan for the garden is, and R. Blessey stated that it should be turned over first.

R. Blessey stated that this is the Conservation Commission's project for the year because it is an important job for the Town. Arthur Dentrout of 1 Beachwood Grove Road asked if the Commission plans to complete any work before acquiring state approval. R. Blessey responded that the ground for the new garden will be turned regardless.

Jeanette Milkowski of 5 Juniper Lane stated that she is very glad that she came tonight because there are very positive plans to know that the hard work that has been done by the Lions Club to be duplicated for the new field and to be in the heart of the Town with a deer-free place to plant is wonderful, and she thanks the Commission for doing this.

The Commission recessed the meeting at 8:08 PM. The Commission re-convened the meeting at 8:15 PM.

7. **OLD BUSINESS:** None.
9. **ADJOURN:** M. Carmody made a motion to adjourn at 8:17 PM. A. Dew seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

Next regular meeting scheduled for January 9, 2012.*